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SLOVENIA

Statement by H.E. Dr Tea Petrin
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Allow me to thank the host country for its welcome and hospitality, for the excellent facilities, for the superb conditions and for a good start of this gathering.

At Doha, the WTO was given an important and ambitious new negotiating mandate by Ministers. Members have agreed to a far-reaching set of negotiations, to be completed within a three-year time-frame. After lengthy and intensive consultations we are at Cancún to make sure that this mandate will be fulfilled, that, collectively, we will make sure that an overall outcome of the ongoing negotiations will be positive. With sufficient flexibility, based on the recognition that very much can be gained as well as lost, this goal is achievable.

At this mid-point Conference in the DDA negotiations, we need to take stock and give clear and unambiguous political guidance, and take a number of decisions in the sensitive area of agriculture and other key areas, such as non-agricultural products market access and the Singapore Issues. Further, decisions on special and differential treatment and implementation issues and language on the enhancement of negotiations on services are needed as well as decisions on trade and environment and rules. I welcome the solution of the access to medicines issue as a singularly important issue for development. I further welcome the accession of Cambodia and Nepal to the WTO.

Touching on the main issues, I would like to reiterate some points of importance to Slovenia.

At the footstep of EU membership, Slovenia will be adopting EU's common commercial and competition policies, including all measures and agreements in favour of LDCs and developing countries. It is therefore guided in negotiations on market access, in its general approach, by the EC.

Slovenia attaches great importance to the negotiations of all forms of market access, as an ambitious agenda on agricultural products, non-agricultural products and services.

On Agriculture, the EU's political agreement on the reform of common agricultural policy is an important European contribution to the DDA and to the negotiations in agriculture.

As a small economy and not a large operator on the world agricultural markets, Slovenia's objectives are geared on better adjusted, market-oriented, less trade-distorting mechanisms of domestic support, which help agricultural producers meet new and better standards and policies geared towards consumer interests. Safeguarding the rural economy, however, promoting the environment and income stabilization are the mainstay of non-trade concerns of importance to Slovenia as a basis for the facilitation of agricultural trade. A substantial and balanced result in Agriculture is clearly necessary. But Agriculture is not the single focal point.

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On non-agricultural products the clear objective is to stick to the Doha mandate of effective reductions of tariffs, best achieved by applying a single harmonizing formula, applicable to all tariff lines, as a core element, with complimentary sectoral liberalization.

Developing and least-developed countries are likely to receive substantial gains from the ongoing GATS negotiations. This sector hasn't been discussed in recent weeks, which doesn't mean that it is any less significant. These negotiations should continue on the basis of an agreed timetable. Effective market access and discussions on domestic regulations under Article VI, could ensure a mutually satisfactory outcome, promote necessary transparency and create a basis for monitoring the implementation of commitments made.

For the Singapore Issues, we need to establish modalities here at Cancún and launch real negotiations as agreed at Doha in order to preserve the principle of the single undertaking, to develop new rules and promote the integration of trade and investment into development strategies. We support all efforts to move this part of the agenda forward.

The special and differential treatment and implementation issues are complex and often technical. However, no effort should be spared to define a comprehensive package of measures and to continue the process of clarification of the various issues, including further discussions of the initiatives that could improve disciplines and functions of the multilateral system based on the current rules and agreements.

Development gains can be only boosted by institutional cooperation that is referred to as "coherence". The analytical work in this regard, combined with focused trade-related technical cooperation and capacity-building, and through it, evaluation of what works best, should create the right conditions for the developing countries to be able to exercise their rights and obligations under the WTO agreements. Slovenia supports the initiative for duty-free, quota-free access for all products of export interest to the least-developed countries and establishing principles of free and fair trade in primary products and closer trade-related alliances with developing countries. Developing countries should be enabled to develop their commercial and exporting capacities and diversify their production bases, to replace customs resources by other resources.

There are compelling reasons for an ambitious outcome of this Conference and for a comprehensive post-Cancún work programme in order to meet all the objectives set out in the Doha Ministerial Declaration.

I believe that we will find enough political wisdom to be able to make another step towards trade liberalization, while at the same time taking into account developmental aspects of it.
